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AUTHOR	Lamb, Stephen; Long, Michael; Malley, Jeff
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ABSTRACT

A study examined access and equity in vocational education and training (VET) in Australia for youth from different social and educational backgrounds using data from a program of national longitudinal surveys. Secondary VET participation was low; youth from lower socioeconomic backgrounds were more likely to enroll; and students were more likely to proceed to further studies in the postschool VET sector. Post-school education and training participation had grown, with substantially increased rates of entry to higher education for girls and to postschool VET for boys; higher education was the main destination for youth from higher status origins, VET for those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and early school leavers; and rural youth were more likely to participate in VET. Apprenticeship continued to be male dominated; it was stronger among lower socioeconomic groups and was chosen by middle and low achievers. Traineeships were important for females. Technical and further education (TAFE) completion rates varied by course, rural or urban location, and level of schooling attained. Work-based findings showed younger employees received less formal and more informal training, and higher educational qualifications were associated with higher levels of training. Durations of unemployment were shorter and earnings higher for males with apprenticeship training or who participated in TAFE diploma courses; female higher education graduates had a substantial earnings advantage; and males with a TAFE diploma training or who completed apprenticeship had the highest average weekly earnings. (The report contains 53 references and description of variables.) (YLB)

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